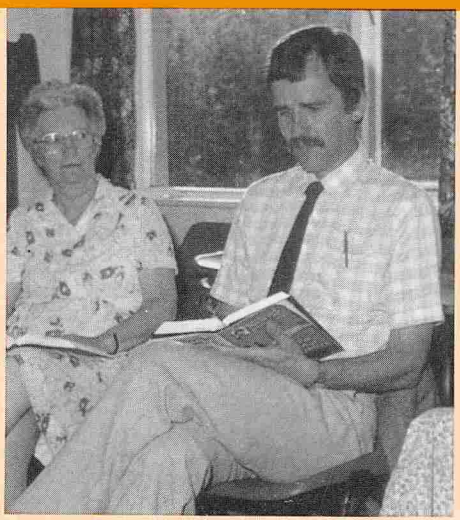
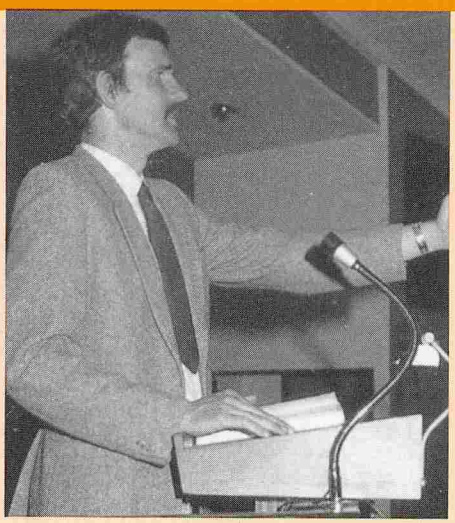
REFORMATION TODAY '87





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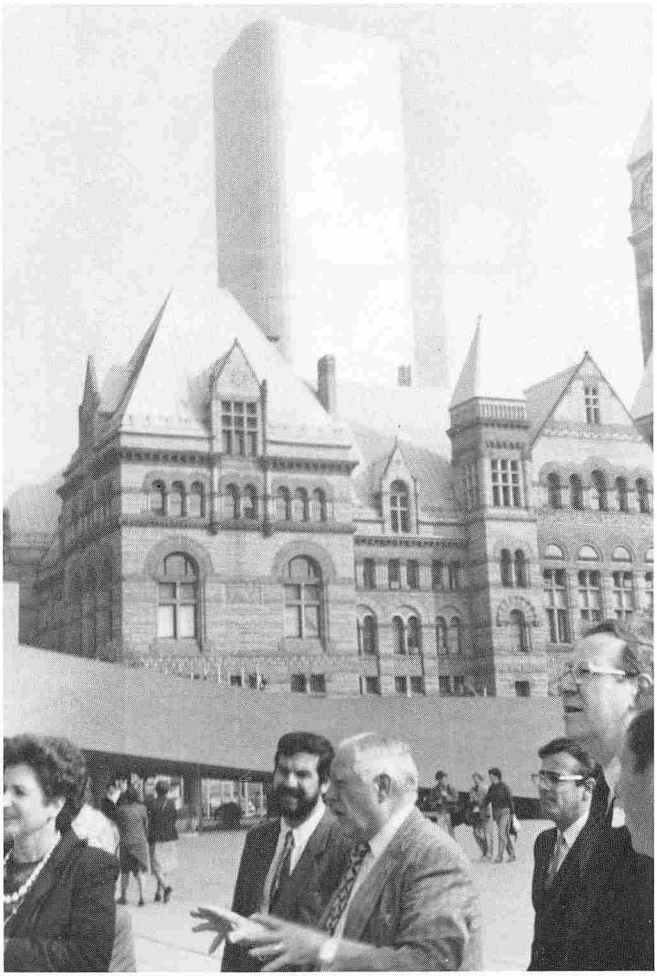

During the Third International Conference held at Jarvis Street Baptist Church Toronto a tour of the city was conducted by Wilf Bauman managing editor of 'The Gospel Witness'. Those who embarked on this thoroughly enjoyable outing were rewarded with a rich historical description of the development of the city, as well as inside views of the Mayor's office, the magistrates courts and other buildings of interest.

The picture above shows some of the new architecture in the background and some of the old in the foreground. Wilf Bauman is in the centre of the picture using his hands as effective guides and preachers should. Next to him is Roberto Israel Velert of Spain, while on the right is Roberto's armour bearer and fellow pastor, together with Stuart Latimer whose wife Charlotte is over on the left, all intrigued by what must surely be one of the world's most attractive cities.

How can we be better preachers?

We sometimes hear disconcerting and discouraging news about preachers who announce a text and then use it as a launching pad for their thoughts. If the thoughts were biblical and edifying it would help, but often they are irrelevant, disjointed and weak.

Universally there is a clamant need for effective preachers. Think of John Knox and how he was used! There have been great preachers in the past but we need them now in our modern world. Are such men born or are they trained? Surely both born and trained. The greatest preachers have all been indefatigable students. They spent their lives thinking, analysing, improving, and studying to perfect their calling.

Just published is a book called *Preaching*. It is made up of the work of 18 experienced preachers, mostly specialists. (460 pages. Pres. and Ref. for the U.S.A. and E.P. in the U.K.)

Much valued are the books on preaching by Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones and John Stott as well as older books by Spurgeon, Shedd, Dabney, J. W. Alexander and, just reprinted, one by Gardiner Spring (Banner).

This new book contrasts in many ways to most of the others for it majors on our most urgent contemporary needs. It is a book which can be used to accomplish a vast amount of good, not only for those beginning but for those who have much experience in the ministry.

To give an idea of the scope of this book called *Preaching* I will refer to some of the chapters. The work is edited by Samuel Logan, Academic Dean and Associate Professor of Church History at Westminster Seminary. Appropriately he writes on the phenomenology of preaching. This is how he begins, 'If you aim at nothing you will hit it every time! Good planning must be at the top of your list.'

Joel Nederhood explains what it is to be called to be a preacher. This may involve a period of about eight years of intensive training. The ultimate test of calling is scrutiny by the people of God. The whole man must be subject to the church. It is not a question merely of inward desire but a mighty exercise of self-control and discipline, spiritually, morally and practically.

What is involved with regard to scholarship? This subject is presented by James Montgomery Boice. His personal testimony I found totally absorbing and his chapter immensely inspiring. He not only gives firepower to one's desire to read 'classically' (he has actually read major Banner books right through! — such as Cotton Mather's *The Great Works of Christ in America*), but to read contemporaneously. Dr Boice himself absorbs frontline contemporary treatises on creation and origins, as well as treatises which enable him to be chairman of the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy. His scope of reading reminds me of 'the Doctor' who used to read political biographies and medical journals as well as theology. Preachers should not be cramped men but broad in their knowledge and comprehensive in their understanding.

Front cover — *The illustrations are taken from the cover of the British edition (E.P.) of the new book called* Preaching.

In his essay on the whole man R. C. Sproul maintains that when a preacher gives himself wholly to a service and to preaching the effort is equal to eight hours of manual labour! Twice on the Lord's Day, and little wonder we feel that we have been hit with a sledgehammer and flattened by a steamroller!

Many have benefited greatly from Edmund Clowney's preaching on Christology. He has shown us the way to expound the O.T. In his chapter it was delightful to observe that he has gone even further in opening our horizons on how to preach Christ from the O.T. If you are a minister be sure to make the most of this goldmine.

Sinclair Ferguson explains what is involved with regard to exegesis, and Donald MacLeod does the same for systematic theology. These matters are utterly basic and essential. Both chapters are masterpieces, *multum in parvo,* they manage to say much in a few pages.

Likewise, Hendrik Krabbendam begins his exposition on Hermeneutics and Preaching by quoting the contents page of a book on that subject. That illustrates what is really involved in his subject. Hermeneutics (the principles of interpretation) is foundational to preaching. Of course the subject is too large for one chapter. The writer therefore concentrates on two basic issues, 1. The biblical text has a *single meaning* determined by the will of the author as expressed in the text with a view to a specific public, and 2. The biblical text has *a manifold purpose* that is squarely based on the meaning of the text and can be formulated by means of universal principles and patterns to be gleaned from it with a view to any public. This reminds us of the opening paragraph above, the reference to using texts as springboards for our thoughts. Brother Krabbendam shows that the Bible is not to be used as a Pandora's box to unpack our moralisings, spiritualisings, allegorisings and psychologisings.

Sermon Structure and flow (Glen C. Knecht); Rhetoric (Lester De Koster) – this chapter includes a wonderful and inspiring sketch of the history of rhetoric; Application (John F. Bettler); and Storytelling (Jay Adams), all provide valuable instruction. Some preachers overdo illustration and stories. We have heard some who seem to have an infinite encyclopaedia of anecdotes. However, there are others who never rest their hearers minds and who urgently need to master this art. I found the essay by Jay Adams very convicting and suggest that most Reformed preachers in Britain need to read it.

Geoff Thomas on Powerful Preaching outlines what it takes to be an effective expositor. He specialises on the role of faith. 'Faith underlines all our preaching, as it underlines all intellectual processes' – 'Faith has the power to make a man go on in the face of great opposition.'

Some of the best preachers are the worst public readers of Scripture. I've heard some that mutter so fast that they have almost finished the reading while half the congregation is still trying to find the prophet Zephaniah! If you read the chapter on this theme by David Dombeck you will do many a favour, because it is unlikely that you will ever read the Scriptures poorly to a congregation again.

Mention has not been made of J. I. Packer's excellent contribution, Why Preach? – or of Peter Vosteen's splendid and essential chapter on Pastoral Theology.

If we put into practice only half the amount we are taught in this book we will be twice the preachers that we are. I am sorry this editorial has been aimed at preachers, but we should all be aware of what preaching really involves, and beside that, if it helps toward better preaching its purpose will be well served for the majority who are listeners.

The Church, Evangelism and Missions

A report describing
The Third International Baptist Conference
Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Canada

When sharing fellowship with some Presbyterian ministers recently I suggested that by far the largest Presbyterian denomination in the world was Baptist! – the Southern Baptist Convention. The SBC also have the largest evangelical missionary force in the world today. The practical reason for this is that they organise themselves as a monolithic body. By this means the SBC can fund a wide number of projects including large seminaries. By comparison independent Baptists are fragmented and cannot think in terms of having their own seminaries or participating in one concerted overall worldwide missionary programme.

Baptist history demonstrates that by forming Associations Baptists can operate very effectively and also uphold the principle of every local church enjoying self government. Of course churches of the SBC enjoy independency, but at the same time they are so closely integrated or joined to the Convention, especially when it comes to finance, that it is possible to compare the SBC to the Presbyterians. When the Convention meets annually the size of the event, with some 30,000 delegates, makes the Free Church Assembly in Scotland look like a Sunday School outing!!

What has this to do with the above described conference? The answer is that this gathering is the nearest many of us ever get to operating in global terms as far as practice is concerned. To some degree we share with like-minded ministers from all over the world. For instance I met for the first time an indigenous Reformed Baptist Red Indian pastor of the Cree tribe which inhabits the northern provinces of Canada. At a former conference I met a pastor from Fiji whose testimony has appeared in these pages. There is a limit to how many people we can know well and correspond with. An assembly can soon become so large that you are simply lost in the crowd. How our Lord is going to organise the New Jerusalem so that we can meaningfully fellowship with so vast a number we do not yet know.

This conference is a convenient size. It is sponsored by the Toronto Baptist Seminary of Jarvis Street. Through the Seminary and supported by the local church contacts have been built up in many countries. A healthy freedom characterises the conference as far as doctrine is concerned. In all matters central there is unity and in issues where interpretation is more difficult there is freedom. Debate was vigorous but I did not detect one unpleasant verbal attack and nothing snide.

The conference has struggled with its methodology which is that every paper is submitted well before the time. That is an excellent discipline. Preparation should always be thorough and meticulous but it poses a problem for some speakers as to whether they should read their papers. A minority (and I include myself), will have nothing to do with reading. On the basis of what has been submitted we preach a message aiming for maximum relevance and not referring to notes of any kind. To be fair that does not suit the nature of some of the materials which may be analytical in style, or which may have a high proportion of statistical data. Some papers contain valuable quotations, which although not like the Bible which is verbally infallible, nevertheless are so sensitively joined together or compacted that inaccurate citation destroys their effectiveness. Hence it is better read.

Eric Wright's paper on the Church Growth

Movement illustrates the problem. His presentation included an up to date statement of what the Church Growth Movement is, followed by an appraisal. This was an enormous undertaking for one paper. It would have taken ages to read it and some undoubtedly would fall asleep. As it was Eric Wright guided us over the material in a vital way, like a tour operator, showing the salient points of the Church Growth Movement. He gave us a brief history and when it came to analysis he spoke mostly extempore providing a telling and valuable contribution.

The theme of the conference was 'The Church, Evangelism and Missions'. The speakers: L. Perkins, D. Molla, M. Holdt, E. Wright, R. Holmes, J. K. Davies, P. Green, D. Straub, R. Huser, T. Nettles, E. Hulse, E. Blackburn, J. Campbell, S. Olyott, and R. Nicole.

We have already mentioned Eric Wright, formerly a missionary from Pakistan but now pastoring Long Branch Baptist Church in Toronto. He is Professor of Missions at the seminary and author of *Tell the World* published by E.P. Roger Nicole's exposition is included in this issue of *R.T.* Robert Huser is pastor of 'La Bonne Nouvelle', Mulhouse, France, and Daniel Molla pastor of a church in Bienne, Switzerland. Peter Green is engaged in Wycliffe work in the Philippines, and Robert Holmes is a pastor of a Baptist church at Orangeville in Ontario. Larry Perkins is Academic Dean of Northwest Baptist Theological College, Vancouver, B.C., Canada. The other contributors have been introduced to our readers in former issues of the magazine.

The printed papers in A4 size double-spacing, 255 pages, are available at $15 (Canadian) plus postage from Toronto Baptist Seminary, 130 Gerrard Street East, Toronto, M5A 3TA, Canada.

Public rallies were held in the main church during the evenings. In addition to the expositions there were reports from different places. Roberto Israel Velert of Spain described how believers in Barcelona now have their own radio station. Just a few years ago when evangelicals in Spain were besieged and persecuted this would have been out of the question. Y. Hurtubiese of Quebec brought us up to date on the continuing revival in Quebec province among the French-speaking people. There is now a French-speaking seminary in Quebec for the training of much needed ministers. We need to pray that other French-speaking countries and communities might experience spiritual awakening. For instance how many of us have even heard of St Pierre and Miquelon, a vestige of the French Empire, consisting of eight rocky islands at the mouth of the Canadian St Lawrence river? The population is 6,000, 98% R.C. This is the only territory in the Americas without a Protestant Church.

It is not feasible to review the papers here but it will be profitable to refer to some highlights. In speaking on the biblical foundations for evangelism and missions, L. Perkins warned that the greatest danger to us all is the resurgence of universalism. Some find it difficult to maintain that the evangelical faith is *the* only way of salvation, but once we compromise and admit other ways 'the very life of evangelism and missions dies'.

Peter Green in his exposition on 'Missions and the Diversity of Cultures', stressed the importance of taking the trouble to understand the culture, language and environment of the people to whom we minister. One illustration used by him was particularly helpful. He referred to the Dani people of Irian Jaya who are heavily involved in the rituals of spiritism, invoking help for all kinds of situations including the clearing of fields and the planting of crops. When they responded to the gospel the Dani people were taught not to indulge in these rituals. As a result life for them was dull; a dimension was missing. The speaker suggested that we should be alert to use our freedom to replace bad habits with scriptural ones. For the Dani people, to be encouraged to replace the bad meetings with prayer meetings to invoke the help of the Holy Spirit for their different enterprises, backed with suitable passages of Scripture,

will help fill the vacuum. Why should the gospel be asserted as though it only negates? We need to use our resources imaginatively.

Martin Holdt in a thoroughly helpful presentation of the centrality of repentance stressed the need to be careful about the nature of repentance when new members are being admitted to the church. How did Simon Magus gain entrance when it soon became evident that he was far from repentance?

In his paper on 'The Local Church; the Instrument for Missions', J. K. Davies stressed the importance of teamwork. Our Lord sent out 70 two by two, and from Antioch Paul and Barnabas went together. Have we neglected this principle? Also emphasised was the need for churches to work together, especially in church-planting ventures.

David Straub in dealing with the subject of religiously pluralistic societies gave a few examples of this reality. For instance 250,000 Haitians now live in New York. There are 500 mosques in Britain. In the Los Angeles area there are 81 different language groups. The speaker urged that we retain our strong convictions about the necessity of the gospel. He said, 'Every other religion or world-life view is fundamentally wrong. It is man-centred, not giving glory to God. It is inconsistent and self-contradictory. It is idolatrous and must of necessity spawn immorality.' We will need to be very clear in our knowledge if we maintain the above with Muslims, that is if we are going to convince them. This paper reminded us of the need to be clear at all times about the utter uniqueness of Christ's person and the uniqueness of the atonement. With regard to our pluralistic society we observe of the Ecumenical Movement that this false movement is totally unfaithful to Christ when it comes to maintaining the uniqueness of the gospel. Indeed to many in the movement Christianity is just one system of morality standing alongside many other systems. The idea is given that Christ came into the world merely to give us yet another system of morality.

The paper presented by Robert Huser of Mulhouse, France, highlighted our continued and urgent need for attractive evangelistic literature. We have a vast quantity of materials in the English language to assist and build up Christians but so little that is suitable for evangelism. One of the workshops at the conference was addressed by a worker from the organisation 'Jews for Jesus'. Some of the eight page full colour, fully illustrated tracts, produced for the one specific aim of evangelism are of the highest professional quality. (P.O. Box 487, STA. Z, Toronto, Ontario M5N 2Z6.) Why is it that none of our publishing houses succeed in providing materials of that kind for use by the churches? Is it a lack of artistic talent? Is it a lack of commercial viability? Is it that our best writers are always too busy with expository materials for believers? We hear that John Blanchard has made a determined effort to try and meet the need and that E.P. is to be the publisher. This should be very successful but at the end of the day it will be just one title.

John Campbell's preaching on sanctification was at the same high standard maintained by the other evening preachers (E. Blackburn, S. Olyott, R. Nicole). It was cognisant of the work done by scholars – sanctification is first punctiliar, positional, definitive, perfect. But the style of presentation was a model as far as popular preaching is concerned even to the use of humorous ditties like the one warning against over-activity in the local church,

Mary was a little lamb,
She should have been a sheep,
But she joined the Baptist Church
And died through lack of sleep!

In speaking on adoption Stuart Olyott majored on the fact that Sonship should be the controlling thought at every point in the Christian life. There is a world of difference between legalists who live by rules and members of a family who behave according to a code of love and respect. You can keep rules and yet hate the father of the household. Our Father has given commandments, but they are not burdensome (1 Jn 5:3).

(continued on page 6)

Dr Roger Nicole

Dr Roger Nicole was born near Berlin in 1916, the son of a Swiss Huguenot pastor. His native language is French which naturally gives him considerable influence among French speaking evangelicals. After teaching at Gordon-Conwell Seminary near Boston, Massachussets, for 50 years, Dr Nicole is about to retire. The following is the substance of Dr Nicole's sermon given at the Third International Baptist Conference which is reported in this issue. It is interesting to know that Gordon-Conwell has produced 3,400 graduates about 1,000 of whom now minister in the New England States.

Reconciliation and Propitiation

The term 'atonement' is found very seldom in the New Testament, even in the King James Version, so it is rather surprising in a sense that the word is so common in theological language. 'Atonement,' of course, is a genuine English word. It is made up of the preposition 'at', the numeral 'one' and the suffix 'ment'. It means the transaction by which people are brought 'at one'.

The word 'reconciliation', which is probably a more exact translation of the group of words for atonement, bears witness to the same kind of truth, for in reconciliation we have the transaction by which people who are estranged are brought back into unity and harmony. The prefix 're' suggests that there was an original condition of harmony which was disrupted; then there is a transaction that takes place which brings back

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THE CHURCH, EVANGELISM AND MISSIONS *(continued from page 5)*

This report ends with a practical suggestion. A digital clock should be installed which runs backwards, always showing how many minutes remain and then gives the familiar *peep-peep-peep* alarm when time has run out for the speaker, or for those required to give a five minute response to the papers. Such a gadget may prove far more effective than chairmen who simply have not the heart to discipline those who go over time. It will take a stubborn heart to outdo the peeping clock which only turns off when the speaker sits down! □□□□

unity to those who were estranged. We talk about friends who get into a quarrel of some kind or another and then are reconciled. They are brought back into an attitude of friendship. Sometimes we have this in a home where people who are married experience estrangement. This may even lead to divorce in which the marriage is cancelled before the law. But then there is reconciliation. The spouses are brought back into the conjugal relationship and hopefully redevelop a life of understanding and love.

Reconciled to God

The word 'reconciliation' is used in Scripture to describe our relationship to God. It is found in the New Testament in five places, in two of them in great concentration.

We find it in Romans 5, for example:

> *Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation* (Rom 5:9-11, N.I.V.).

In these verses the word 'reconciliation' or 'reconciled' comes three times. So obviously the Apostle was very concerned with this particular idea. When we have repetition of a word in Scripture it is clearly something that needs to be listened to, and this is the case here.

Then, in the other passage where again great concentration is found, 2 Corinthians 5:18-20, we read:

> *God... reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.*

Paul used the word five times in these three verses. So we have here a very strong scriptural emphasis upon the fact that there is enmity between God and men and that the work of Jesus Christ effects reconciliation. He brings back into a position of fellowship, blessing, love and trust those who were in some sense separated and estranged.

Man or God?

When we consider the language of Scripture we need to observe very carefully what this reconciliation entails. Here we find a number of people who emphasise that the reconciliation must be the reconciliation of men to God. That is, it is men who are enemies of God. It is their minds that are alienated. Therefore, they need to be changed. We sometimes hear the additional comment: 'God does not need to be changed because God is love and is always prepared to receive his children. The whole process needs to terminate on men. It designates a change of disposition on their part.'

Sometimes, in support of this approach, emphasis is placed on the parable of the prodigal son, where they say, 'Here the Lord Jesus Christ gives us the very essence of the gospel, and what do we find? Does the father need to have a change of attitude? Does the father need to have his wrath turned into compassion and love in order to receive his erring but repenting son?' The answer is obviously, 'No.' The father is always ready to receive him. In fact, we can judge the representation that he is at the

window, watching to see if there is not a sign that the prodigal is coming. He is watching the road, looking for his son to come back, eager to receive him. When he finally sees his son, he runs to meet him and press him to his heart. He does not say, 'You are all sweaty; go, take a bath, and afterward I'll give you a kiss.' No, he takes this wretched son who has dissipated his fortune in riotous living, and presses him to his heart, saying, 'Let us rejoice, for my son has come back.'

'All right', some say, 'In this parable there is no place whatsoever for a change in the attitude of God, represented by the father. Therefore, people who insist on the wrath and justice of God and on the Atonement as satisfaction are really tarnishing the glory and beauty of the love of the Father for us.'

How shall we respond to this? The thesis I would like to commend to you is that while it is true that our enmity to God needs to be overcome and while it is true that we need to be changed radically – a change so great that only the term 'resurrection' can properly describe it – still the major emphasis of Scripture is not so much on the setting aside of our enmity to God, important as it is, but on the transaction through the work of Jesus Christ by which the demands of God are properly satisfied and a new attitude, involving a new outpouring of his blessing and fatherly concern and care, is made possible.

Moreover, lest we should be too much impressed by the argument from the parable of the prodigal son, we should note that the parable does not talk at all about Jesus. We have two people in the first part of the parable: the father and the disobedient son. So obviously our Lord did not mean to represent the whole gospel here. It was one aspect of the gospel only. The people whose view I attempted to portray have, I think, caught that aspect. But what they have not asked sufficiently is under what circumstances God can, without detriment to the interests of his justice, holiness and moral government of the world, receive sinners as if they were not sinners. It is precisely this that requires the work of reconciliation in its full biblical dimensions. Therefore, we cannot short-circuit the message of the gospel by omitting that ground on which the mercy of the father *can* be manifested without doing detriment to God's other attributes and purposes.

A first consideration showing that the reconciliation in view is first of all the reconciliation of God to us – that is, the setting aside of God's just grievances against us – can be developed in connection with those great passages cited earlier. In them the Apostle does not at all leave us in a quandary as to what he has in view. Romans 5:9 says, 'Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!' Here the wrath of God is presented as that from which we need to be saved. This is not a God who is indifferent to evil. This is not a God who tolerates evil by dismissing it lightly. It is a God who by virtue of his own righteous character must be burning with wrath against every iniquity.

Then again, we read that when we were God's enemies we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son and have received reconciliation (Rom 5:11). These are not things that relate merely to some transformation within us but to something outside us secured by the completed action of Christ.

In 2 Corinthians 5, the matter may be even clearer, for in verse 19 we read, 'God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ' and then immediately, 'not counting men's sins against them'. The reconciliation that is spoken of is a process by which the sins of men which

would naturally issue in condemnation are not counted against them. So the reconciliation in view is one by which God sets aside his own legitimate and necessary grievance against the sinner by virtue of the work of the Lord Jesus who has assumed the burden of that sin. The Apostle makes patently clear that reconciliation involves God himself, reconciliation by which God through his own resourceful and sovereign action can graciously receive those who are sinners and not forfeit his rights as Judge of the world.

The Wrath of God

This is made very plain for those who wish to read the Bible carefully, for the concept of the wrath of God is spread throughout Scripture. Leon Morris, who has examined this matter perhaps more carefully than anyone else in his great book *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross,* has counted twenty different Hebrew words that are used to represent the indignation of God against evil. Twenty words! I wonder how many we could think of in English? How far short would we fall from twenty! Yet the Old Testament has twenty different words for the one concept of the indignation of God against sin. Moreover, this concept finds expression in more than 580 passages!

The wrath of God is not just an Old Testament idea either. It is found in at least 100 New Testament passages too. Some of the most fearful are from the lips of Jesus himself, for no one spoke of the wrath of God as manifested in the harrowing of hell as strongly as Jesus did. The wrath of God is a persistent theme in Revelation, the very climax of the Bible, for that book has a tremendous outpouring of divine wrath – vials, seals and trumpets – almost all expressions of the judgment of God.

It is necessary to make a right assessment of the gravity of sin. Obviously, people who want to dismiss it as a mere *peccadillo,* a little thing that can be discarded readily, will not want to have a conception in which God is upset by evil. They will say, 'We are sinners, yes, but it really doesn't matter. It is of no consequence.' But that is not the biblical outlook on the matter. The biblical outlook is that sin is supremely displeasing to God. It was that way in connection with the terrible sin of David. God was exceedingly displeased (2 Sam 11:27). So too is God exceedingly displeased with our sin, because it is an affront to him as the holy, sovereign One.

Many people who have a superficial view of the Atonement deserve the verdict of that well-known statement of Anselm, who, I think, epitomises the matter in one pithy formula: 'You have not yet considered how grievous a thing sin is.' It is only when we consider how grievous a thing sin is and how greatly displeased God is with it, that we are in a position to understand what it means to be reconciled to him and what was entailed in producing this reconciliation. Only then can we understand what great cost was necessary in order to bring those who have alienated themselves from God back to that position where again they may receive his great favour and blessing.

Propitiation and Wrath

Here it is proper to emphasise the language of propitiation. 'Propitiation' is not a common word in our daily language. In fact, the people who translated the N.I.V. gathered that an average high school graduate would not understand it and so avoided it. I support them in this because I feel that the primary thing in translating the Scripture is to make plain what God has said. If we use words people have a hard time understanding we are, I think, betraying our task. We need to find ways of expressing the matter plainly. That is what the N.I.V.

has attempted to do. So the translators in passages which speak about propitiation here used the term 'sacrifice for sin'. This is not a full description of what is involved in propitiation, but it is a good attempt.

This term was used in pagan worship in reference to what might be called a process of celestial bribery. The ancients thought, 'The gods are irritated against me, so I have to make sure that I get them something that pleases them and will avert their wrath.' They were making some payments, as it were, bribes, in order to secure the gods' favour. This concept is so unworthy of the true God that one could easily think that the New Testament writers would shun such a word. They would say, 'That's a word we cannot use.' But in fact, so deeply were they convinced of the reality of the wrath of God that they did use 'propitiation'.

Of course, in the New Testament propitiation is never a process of celestial bribery. Propitiation is the gracious act of God by which he himself has made the provision that is necessary for the outpouring of his blessing, by which he himself has taken care that all the demands of the law and of justice be met, so that sinners might be received in grace. Propitiation involves recognition of the objective character of the demands of God; and the Scripture teaches that those demands are met by the work of Jesus Christ. The fact that the word 'propitiation' is used – once in Romans 3:25, twice in Hebrews and twice in 1 John – is an important evidence that the reconciliation the Scripture speaks about is primarily the reconciliation of God to man.

Two Misrepresentations

Let us be sure, however, that the following two very unfortunate caricatures are not permitted to gain acceptance as a proper representation of the evangelical view. The first suggests that somehow the Father is the one who imposes the demands of justice, and thus he appears to us in the rather unlovable character, some kind of irascible, inflexible person who is going to have his pound of flesh or his pint of blood. And then, Jesus is the one who is gracious and merciful and who therefore comes forward and says, 'All right, I will offer what is necessary'. Then he offers himself for his people, according to this view, and the wrath of God is changed into love.

Obviously there is good reason to resent this kind of representation. It is not scriptural. It is not Reformed. I would like to warn people of Reformed thought never to make presentations that would give reason for people to construe the matter in this way. What we have here is the love of the triune God toward unworthy sinners by which the Father, Son and Holy Spirit together counsel to establish a plan by which these sinners may receive the blessings of divine grace rather than be exposed to righteous anger. In this process the Father draws the plan of salvation, the Son in full harmony with the Father affects that which is necessary for the setting aside of God's grievances against the sinner, and the Holy Spirit applies this blessing to the individual life so as to draw people effectually into the benefits of the divine grace. We never have the persons of the Trinity at loggerheads with one another. Wrath is not *changed* into love. Wrath is averted. Justice is satisfied. Demands are met. And as a result, the love and blessings of God are poured out upon those who believe on Jesus.

The second caricature comes from a failure to recognise the divine nature of the Son who has come as mediator. Notice that God did not delegate the task of bearing the weight of sin to a third party, but it is God himself (as Son) who paid the cost. The one who bears the full burden of divine wrath

George Fox and Early Quakerism

by Christopher Rule

My background is British Quakerism. From it I learnt of George Fox, dissatisfied with powerless second-hand religion, searching until he found reality. When by God's grace I was converted, I tended to identify with Fox, although my experience eventually led me out of Quakerism.

Unfriendly references in Puritan works[1] led to rethinking. Seventeenth-century Quakerism was not monolithic, and we must remember this as we proceed. Splits occurred as they settled down to eighteenth century respectability.

(continued on page 12)

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against sin is God, for 'God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ'. The marvel of the gospel is that God has been pleased to bear the burden of our penalty in full in order that we might be beneficaries of the fullness of his redemptive grace.

Effectual Reconciliation

How effective is this reconciliation? Is it truth or is it merely an illusion? Does the situation resemble certain ceasefires where the soldiers have presumably stopped fighting but there are still bullets flying back and forth? Not at all! Instead, Scripture represents the work of Jesus Christ as encompassing us in a covenant, a solemn commitment which God makes to us.

Hebrews says that Jesus is the mediator of a new covenant. 'By calling the covenant new he has made the first one obsolete' (Heb 8:13). We read about being adopted into the family of God: 'Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God' (Rom 8:14) and, 'By him we cry, Abba, Father' (v. 15). 'To all who receive him,' said John, 'to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God' (Jn 1:12). You remember the beautiful passage in 1 John where the apostle says, 'How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called the children of God! And that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is' (1 Jn 3:1,2). 'If we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ' (Rom 8:17). 'The Holy Spirit . . . is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession – to the praise of his glory' (Eph 1:13,14). Union with Christ is represented as the union of the plant with its branches (Jn 15), the head with the body (1 Cor 12), the husband with the wife (Eph 5).

The reconciliation that Christ accomplished is one that sets aside God's grievances and introduces us by massive grace into the immensity of blessing that God has provided for us. The riches of the elect of God in Jesus Christ are described in Ephesians 1. That is what God has prepared. So let us accept and discharge with joy that ministry of reconciliation which God has given us: 'God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ' (2 Cor 5:19).

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The Background to Early Quakerism

We must not think of the period as a simple struggle between Archbishop Laud and the Puritans. There were many sects, including Familists, Grindletonians, Levellers, Diggers, Muggletonians, Fifth Monarchists (who could be members of other groups), Ranters and Seekers.[2] Many of these exalted the supposed immediate leading of the Spirit above the Scriptures. To this list should be added various unattached extremists like John Robbins, who, Muggleton (of the Muggletonians) tells us, believed himself to be God Almighty and claimed to have raised Old Testament characters from the dead![3]

Two groups especially interest us. The *Seekers* had given up existing churches and were looking for something to satisfy their spiritual longings. Some expected new apostles and miracles. Many would be converted (The Quaker word is 'convinced', which does *not* imply that only the mind is involved) by Fox. The *Ranters* had no organisation. They are sometimes called Pantheists. They looked to a God within, and sometimes claimed to be God. Practising Antinomians, they saw what others said were sins as part of their perfection. Fox often attacked these people. He once asked some who claimed to be God if it would rain on the next day! But he seems attracted by their beliefs, claiming that they once had a 'pure convincement' but they 'shunned the cross'.

Fox's immediate background was the Leicestershire village of Fenny Drayton where he was born in 1624. This was close to Watling Street, a busy main road. The Church there had a succession of Puritan (Presbyterian) ministers. He had godly parents, and tells us his father was nicknamed 'righteous Christer' and his mother was 'of the stock of the Martyrs'.

Fox's Early Religious Development

He was a serious child and youth. 'When I came to eleven years of age I knew pureness and righteousness . . . the Lord taught me to . . . act faithfully . . . inwardly to God and outwardly to man, and to keep to Yea and Nay in all things.'

He was apprenticed to a shoemaker who also dealt in sheep and cattle. It is claimed that one of his workmates was a Ranter.

When he was about nineteen he tells us that at a fair two 'professors' suggested to him that the first to stop drinking should pay for all. 'I was grieved that any who made profession of religion should do so . . . and said, "If it be so I'll leave you" . . . I returned home . . . but could not sleep but . . . cried to the Lord, who said(!) "Thou seest how young people go together into vanity . . . thou must forsake all. . . ." Then at the command of God on the ninth day of the seventh month 1643, I left my relations. . . .'

He wandered, probably supporting himself by shoemaking, deeply troubled, consulting 'priests' (he called all officially recognised protestant ministers this) and 'separate preachers', but none helped. He absented himself from public worship, sitting 'alone in hollow trees' with his Bible.

Eventually he tells us, 'when all my hopes in . . . all men were gone . . . then, oh! then I heard a voice which said, "There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition": and when I heard it, my heart did leap for joy.'

This is usually regarded as his 'convincement', but he never speaks of conviction of sin at this time. It is perhaps at least as likely that he was converted at eleven or before this.

His struggles at this time were more concerned with temptation. 'I asked (Dr. Craddock of Coventry) the ground of temptation and despair, and how troubles came to be wrought in man.' That conversation ended with Dr. Craddock's rage when Fox stepped on a flower bed. Such experiences drove Fox from the orthodox so that his spiritual development became solitary.

His concern over temptation suggests that he was looking for a short cut to victory over sin. Perhaps he had seen the hollowness of Ranter 'perfection' but still wanted perfection. He expected salvation to produce perfection, but did not look for great conviction of sin. 'He that shows a man his sin is the same that takes it away.' Some Quakers, however, did suffer deep conviction.

By 1647 he had a message and was preaching. He taught:

a. Perfection, powerfully attacking the evils of the day, and expecting Christians not to sin.[4] Of his experience he says, 'I knew nothing but pureness and innocency, and righteousness, being renewed up into the image of God by Christ Jesus, to the state of Adam . . . before he fell . . . such as were faithful to (God), in the power and light of Christ, should come up into that state. . . .'
b. Universal Redemption (he was no Calvinist).
c. He asserted that Baptism and the Lord's Supper were more or less Jewish shadows.
d. He saw existing churches as apostate and their ministers as hirelings.[5]
e. Most distinctively, he taught the 'Inner Light'. 'That of God in every man,' or, to use his own favourite slogan, 'Christ is come to teach his people himself', i.e., a continuing immediate revelation in all men's hearts. This is responsible for many Quaker peculiarities, like the refusal to take off the hat to men. These were seen as direct commands of God. He still valued Scripture, calling it 'the words of God', not 'word', which would imply finality and completeness. A number of 'Friends' competent to judge said, 'Though the Bible were lost it might be found in the mouth of George Fox'.[6] Thus his wide knowledge of Scripture regulated his 'inspiration' in a way that was not true of others who looked for new revelations.

Early Ministry

A dying man 'prophesied' something of what Fox would do, and on hearing this Fox went into some sort of trance for two weeks. He felt that when many spoke of Christ 'the serpent spake in them'.

He soon found a following. A group of General Baptists in the Mansfield area had split. Some met on 'first days' to 'play at shovel board and be merry'. They

had become some sort of Ranters. The rest formed a group who might be called Seekers. Fox found them a 'tender people', and the group as a whole with few exceptions followed him. This would be repeated when more communities of Seekers were 'convinced'. The Ranter group also provided converts, including their leader Rice Jones. He was later to deny that Christ ever died and suffered. This, together with Fox's over-emphasis on the inward aspects of Christ's work, led to the charge that Quakers denied Christ's outward death. Rice Jones later led a schismatic group, the 'Proud Quakers', at Nottingham.

Between 1649 and 1651 Fox spent much time in prison charged with interrupting a preacher and blasphemy. At this time he told a judge to quake at God's power. This, together with the quaking of his own followers, led to the use of the nickname Quaker. His imprisonment was lengthened when he refused a commission in the army. This was on pacifist grounds, but Quaker pacifism was not obvious as early as this. As late as 1685 some joined Monmouth's rebellion, for which they were disciplined.

On release in 1651 he walked barefoot through Lichfield crying, 'Woe unto the bloody city . . .'. This was not typical of Fox, but other Quakers were known to 'go naked as a sign'. Leadings to do such things were tested by asking, 'Are they a cross to the will or of the natural will?' This begins to tackle the problem behind the doctrine of the inner light. We will see later that testing this caused problems of unity.

The North West

1652 is the year the Quakers see as their beginning. Fox moved north, gathering followers at Balby, Doncaster and near Sheffield.

He passed Pendle Hill, pausing to climb it. 'The Lord let me see atop of the hill in what places he had a great people to be gathered.'

He preached in the open-air to above a thousand for three hours on Firbank Fell in Westmorland. At Preston Patrick, after half an hour of silent waiting, he 'stood up in the mighty power of God . . . to preach Christ Jesus, the light of life and the way to God and Saviour of all that believe and obey him'.[7] Large groups of Seekers became Quakers, and these mass 'convincements' in a still traditionally Roman Catholic area gave the movement the appearance of a revival.

In this area he found a headquarters when the family of Judge Fell at Swarthmore Hall was convinced. The Judge, never a Quaker himself, protected them and allowed them to meet in his house. Later Fox married his widow.

Here he also encountered mob violence, and had to cope with the over-enthusiasm of usually female followers who wrote imploring his return in very extravagant language. 'O our life, we hope to see thee again that our joy may be full, for in thy presence is fulness of joy.' Fox showed his disapproval by usually crossing out such expressions in letters he received, but he held the truth of Christ's indwelling in such realistic terms as to encourage this language.

1654 was the year of the great campaign. Sixty-six or seven leaders (The Valiant Sixty) went south. They aimed at London, Bristol and Norwich (the three greatest cities at that time), and at Oxford and Cambridge. Bristol soon had a thousand Quakers; London was also fruitful. Norwich, Oxford and Cambridge were far less responsive. Women preachers were flogged in Oxford and Cambridge. Areas, Scotland in particular, which had already largely followed orthodox Puritanism were less susceptible to Quakerism.

'Charismatic' Manifestations

At Malpas Quakers disrupted Church services when 'the ecstatic state known as "the power" came on one of them'.[8] A modern Quaker, seeing the parallel with Pentecostalism, writes, 'It was prophecy, not tongues speaking, which characterised its charisma'. He quotes a contemporary description of what *might* be tongues-speaking: 'Many were made to utter things in a wonderful manner that they were altogether strangers to.'[9] On the other hand, Mary Pennington wrote in 1668: 'I have heard objection . . . that they wrought not miracles but I said that they did great miracles in that they which were of the world . . . came to turn from it.'

Attempts were made to heal. Francis Howgill wrote to Fox about his failure to heal a lame boy. Fox wrote, but did not publish a 'Book of Miracles', which seem to have been mostly healings. They do not appear to have been so clear cut as to compel assent. Some did attempt dramatic miracles. Susanna Pearson removed a drowned man from his grave and tried to raise him.[10] Fox did not approve. He had more common sense than that.

Belief in continuing revelation encourages such things, and Fox sometimes seemed to think himself infallible. The question of predictive prophecy is hard to evaluate. He advised a woman not to tell Parliament that the King would be restored, but seemed to have accepted it as a true prophecy. He also said he had premonitions of Cromwell's death and of the Fire of London, but his Journal was written up years later. Hindsight can change the perspective and give authority to the most honest writer, as I am sure Fox was. He did not speak of such things until after they had happened. It is very difficult to prove that any of his premonitions were correct.

Meetings involved silent waiting on the Lord in which 'God spoke' to individuals. This might lead them to engage in vocal prayer[11] or preaching. George Whitehead described a meeting which he attended when he was fifteen. He was not deeply impressed by what was said, but felt the workings of God's power. A girl went out, sat on the ground crying bitterly, 'Lord make me clean'. This touched his heart more than all the preaching he had ever heard.

Controversy

Quakers were frequently involved in extravagances. The worst was James Naylor's 'Messianic entry' to Bristol. Hysterical female followers encouraged this, and it was not supported by Bristol Friends. Naylor was overstrained and estranged from Fox at the time. This sort of thing, as well as Quaker views on perfection and immediate revelation, led to many controversial writings.

Samuel Fisher moved from Presbyterianism to Quakerism via the Baptists. He wrote in support of Quaker inspiration.

1. He included apocryphal material as inspired.
2. He included Quaker preaching as inspired.
3. He used proto-Higher Criticism to say Mark was not inspired because he was dependant on Matthew, and Luke was not because he admits using historical research!

The elevation of human sayings to the level of Scripture has devalued Scripture.

Fox answered a hundred anti-Quaker writings in *The Great Mystery of the Great Whore.* As one example, he attacks John Owen's statement that 'we have not kept the commandments of God', saying: 'We do believe thee . . . (but) John was separated from you who said, "He that loves God keeps his commandments". . . .' One feels love of debate rather than love of truth is in control here.

After the Restoration

During 1660 Quakers did rather well, but after the Fifth-Monarchy rising, over four thousand were imprisoned. Persecution increased and as they would not meet in secret they suffered more than others.

Fox was imprisoned from 1646-66, and, on release, found the organisation of Quakerism crumbling. He reorganised them on quasi-Presbyterian lines but without ordained ministers or even an official membership. Although they 'disowned' the disorderly, they did not have a membership until 1737!

He travelled widely in these years, visiting Ireland (1669), Barbados, and America (1671-3), and Holland (1677 and 1684). He died in London on January 13th, 1691, two days after he last preached.

The Problem of Unity

Belief in continuing immediate revelation to all raises the question: 'Does the inner light say the same to everyone?'

The 'Peace Testimony' of 1661 assumed it does. 'The Spirit of Christ . . . is not changeable so as once to command us from . . . evil and again to move unto it.'

But even Quakers do not always agree. The classic Quaker answer is that God speaks through the unanimous agreement of the meeting. Where that leaves the early Fox or a Luther or Athanasius is not then easily answered. We judge such things by the Bible, but Fox, at least in theory, judged the Bible by the inner light.

Naturally tensions developed. John Perrot, on release from a madhouse in Rome, where he had gone with a 'Message from God' to the Pope, believed God had told him that *men* should wear hats even in prayer. This caused a split.

Dissension also arose when a Quaker baptised a woman at her insistence.

Fox's improved organisation of 1666 led to the most serious split. Strict discipline and the refusal to allow meetings to be held secretly, with some other grievances, led John Story and John Wilkinson, who saw their own individual guidance as superior to that of the larger body, to lead a sizeable group to secede.

Concluding Lessons

Robert Barclay, the systematic theologian of Quakerism, wrote (1676): 'It is the direct inspiration of the Spirit that saves, not the secondary authority of Scripture. Scripture witnesses to salvation but is not its origin.' This seems to confuse head knowledge with grace. He pushes this view to its logical conclusion and says those who have never heard of the historic Christ can be saved by the inward Christ.

Subsequent history is instructive. The early fervour died away and outward conformity became very important in the eighteenth century.

In the nineteenth century, Scripture became more important, and evangelical Quakerism developed. In the present century Barclay's identification of the inner light with the historical Christ is at least questioned, and a universalistic mysticism is very common. A modern writer comments that they seem prone to 'violent reversals of opinion'.[12]

Then as now the attractions of a heterodox group immediately raises the question of our own failures and shortcomings. Is there a balance of doctrine and experience in the preaching and in the life of our churches? Do we adequately combat complacency? Although unorthodox and muddled in many ways the strong emphasis on the place of experience attracted many.

The sects and the General Baptists seem to have been particularly attracted to the Quakers, and the Calvinists were not immune. One-quarter of Broadmead Baptist Church in Bristol became Quakers.

It is a temptation to deny a truth because others distort it. Baxter said 'the folly of fanatics' had made him overlook 'the strength of the testimony of the Spirit'.[13] Too many Quakers were ex-Puritans dissatisfied with their experience. We must not let our people rest in anything less than a real and continuing experience of free grace. Fox shows some ministers were content with a mere outward discipline.

We can learn, too, from the burning zeal, the willingness to suffer and die, and the eagerness to obey what was believed to be God's will, while refusing to rest with known sin in the life.

Seeing themselves as the one true church, they attacked others. It is obvious that it was to their advantage to accuse the orthodox of deadness. At one time Quakerism must have seemed the spiritual movement of the future to many.

It would not have been impossible for someone to have heard both Fox and Whitefield preach, yet by Whitefield's time Quakerism was, if not dead, then nearly asleep. It seems that some Quakers recognised this. Whitefield's journals mention a number of Quakers who saw the spiritual reality of his ministry.[14] Here was also real spiritual experience, but in this case it was not exalted above doctrine. Thus, by God's grace, a more stable type of Christian resulted.

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Notes

[1] E.g. John Bunyan *Grace Abounding,* Paragraphs 123-125. Care must be taken with such material because of a tendency to repeat rumours (e.g., Prynn's allegation that they were covert Jesuits) without checking them. There is, however, a similarity between Quaker, Charismatic and Roman Catholic views of revelation.

[2] Christopher Hill, *op. cit.,* gives some details but shows most interest in those that could be seen as proto-socialists.

[3] Muggleton 'Acts' pp. 20-21, Q. in H. G. Wood, *op. cit.,* pp. 7-8. Muggleton saw himself and John Reeve as the two witnesses of Revelation 11.

[4] James Naylor spoke of those who were 'pleading for sin', and Fox used the phrase as well.

[5] For an example see Matthew Henry's *Life of Philip Henry,* Banner of Truth, p. 57.

[6] Reported in 1696 by Quakerism's first historian Gerard Cross.

[7] Thomas Camm's account Q. in *The First Publishers of Truth* p. 244 (a collection of narratives of how Quakerism was established in each country of Britain). This particular account is quoted in most Quaker histories, e.g., J. Punshon *op. cit.* p. 56. Camm was twelve at the time.

[8] W. C. Braithwaite *Beginnings,* p. 124.

[9] A. O. Roberts in *Friends Quarterly,* Oct. 1974, pp. 405-6.

[10] W. C. Braithwaite *Beginnings,* p. 391.

[11] Wm. Penn in his Preface to Fox's Journal says, 'The most awful, living, reverent frame I ever felt or beheld, I must say, was his in prayer'. Sadly my own experience was that vocal prayer was rare in Meetings for Worship in Britain in the 1950s and 60s. It probably still is.

[12] J. Punshon *op. cit.,* p. 205.

[13] Q. Roger Welch in *Christian Arena,* Sept. 1985, p. 13.

[14] *Whitefield's Journals,* Banner of Truth, pp. 335, 341, 343, 422 and 574.

The Names of God

Some theologians (Bavinck and Ten Hoor) have, in expounding the attributes of God, chosen to do so entirely under the names of God. The names by which the Lord describes himself reveal aspects of his character. By making a study of these names we gain enrichment in our appreciation of God's attributes.

We learn from the Bible that the name of God represents the Being or character of God. In other words his name stands for all that he is. Hence we have Exodus 20:24b, 'Wherever I cause my name to be honoured, I will come to you and bless you'. Similarly Solomon prayed at the dedication of the Temple, 'May your eyes be open toward this temple night and day, this place of which you said, "My Name shall be there"' (1 Kgs 8:29).

Obviously some names such as some of those ascribed to the Messiah in Isaiah 9:6 are designed to describe particular or distinctive attributes, 'Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace'. But the name Jehovah (Jahweh) which we shall look at in detail is God's first name and is especially designed to point to all that he is. That was the name which he reserved to reveal particularly when he first formed his people when they came out of Egypt. The New Testament equivalent we can take to be 'Father'.

One of the saddest mistakes often observed today is for Christians to set the Old Testament against the New Testament. During the second century there lived a heretic, Marcion by name. He made up his own New Testament canon and rejected the Old Testament. Marcion led many astray with his distorted teaching. It is most important to remember that the same Triune God is revealed in both testaments. Both are equally inspired. Our Lord used, vindicated, explained, and fulfilled the Old Testament. We depend on both testaments to give us a full revelation of God and his attributes. In many ways we gain more details from the Old than from the New, for the New presupposes the Old and builds upon and endorses it. Especially in the matter of the attributes of God we are dependant on the Old Testament for some of the most glorious insights into this subject of God's character.

Observe some examples of how we are to revere the Name of the LORD.

> *O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens* Psalm 8:1.
>
> *Your name, O LORD, endures forever, your renown, O LORD, through all generations* Psalm 135:13.
>
> *I am the LORD; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols* Isaiah 42:8.

Obviously we are not able in such a short space to reckon with all the names so I will outline the main ones. *Elohim* is the first ascribed to God in the Bible. In the beginning *Elohim* created. This name is more frequent than others and is mostly translated God. The meaning conveyed is one of immense power. The name 'El' – God – is often joined to the names of people or places. Thus, *Eli*jah, *Eli*sha, Beth*el*, Penu*el*, *El* Shaddai is a compound word (El for God and Shaddai for Almighty) which points to the all sufficiency of God. All things are made by him and controlled by him – he is Almighty.

Another name for God is 'Holy' (Hebrew: *kadōsh*). God's name is Holy (Is 40:25). The expression 'the Holy One of Israel', occurs about 30 times in Isaiah. Often it is a direct reference to Christ as our Redeemer. The word 'One' has been added in the English translation, the Holy *One,* because it would look and sound strange simply to have, 'the Holy'. The only true God is very jealous about this attribute of holiness and therefore we should not be surprised to find that 'Holy' is one of his titles. The holiness of God is everywhere stressed in Scripture and often with the direct application that we should be holy.

The name of the Lord *par excellence*, is *Jehovah.* In Exodus 6:3 we read that the Lord said to Moses, 'I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty (El Shaddai) but by my name the LORD I did not make myself known to them.'

When Moses asked for God's name the reply came, 'I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: I AM has sent me to you'. The meaning conveyed by this is that as Jehovah he is eternally and unchangeably divine. He stands before all things created and all things created exist by his will. He is independent, existing of, through and in himself. The ground and fountain of his Being is in himself and does not depend on any other. He is perfectly self-sufficient. He is the uncaused, absolute and eternal Deity. He is the only source of all creation. He is the only sovereignty. There can be no power unless it is derived from him. He is the sole source for all law and righteousness.

The expression 'I AM' not only conveys the truth of self-existence and abolute independence, it also means that he is one LORD. 'Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God is one LORD' (Deut 6:4). There is a unity of the three persons. Jesus is eternally Jehovah, and hence could declare boldly, 'Before Abraham was I AM'.

The Jews considered the name Jehovah too holy to be pronounced. In its place they often used the name *Adonai*; meaning Lord. Hebrew scholars suggest that the original pronunciation is *Jahweh.* This is more frequently used now than Jehovah. The matter of the original vocalization and pronunciation of *Jahweh* is by no means certain. The Septuagint (Greek translation of the OT) translated Jahweh as *Kurios* meaning LORD. Hence when we read the word LORD in capitals it is where the word YHWH appears in the Hebrew. If we add the Masoretic vowel points the word could read literally from the Hebrew *YeHoWah.*

This wonderful name of God is used in such a way as to show that the Lord is with us in all his power. In all his glory and omnipotence he cares for his people. Here are some examples of how the supreme name is joined to other words in a compound form.

JAHWEH-osēnu, 'Jahweh our maker' (Ps 95:6).
JAHWEH-jireh, 'Jahweh will provide' (Gen 22:14).
JAHWEH-rophēcha, 'Jahweh who heals you' (Ex 15:26).
JAHWEH-nissi, 'Jahweh is my banner' (Ex 17:15).
JAHWEH-m'kaddesh, 'Jahweh who makes you holy' (Ex 31:13; Lev 20:8).
JAHWEH-elohēnu,'Jahweh our God' (Ps 99:5,7,8).
JAHWEH-elohēcka, 'Jahweh your God' (Ex 20:2,5,7).
JAHWEH-elohay, 'Jahweh my God' (Zech 14:5).
JAHWEH-shalom, 'Jahweh is Peace' (Ju 6:24).
JAHWEH-tsevaōth, 'Jahweh Almighty' (1 Sam 1:3; Rom 9:29; Ja 5:4).
JAHWEH-rohi, 'Jahweh is my shepherd' (Ps 23:1).
JAHWEH-elyōn, 'Jahweh Most High' (Ps 7:17; 47:2; 97:9).
JAHWEH-tsidkēnu, 'Jahweh Our Righteousness' (Jer 23:6; 33:16).
JAHWEH-shammah, 'Jahweh is there' (Ez 48:35).

With all these titles we should observe that the Almightiness of our Triune God is joined to our frail selves in our vulnerability and weakness.

There is unity and consistency in the names of God whether we find the titles in the OT or the NT. There is nothing contradictory. All that the Lord is to his people in the OT he is to his people in the NT.

We should use the titles of Deity in our prayers. This requires to be done with thoughtfulness that they might be employed appropriately. For instance, in addressing our Lord Jesus Christ we have many titles which we can use. He is the LORD our righteousness (Jer 23:6). He is the KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. He is the bright Morning Star. He is the First and the Last. Especially is he The Lamb (Rev 21,22). He is our Great Shepherd (Heb 13:20), and our great High Priest (Heb 7:26). He is the Light of the world (Jn 8:12). He is the Resurrection and the Life (Jn 11:25). His names are names that can only be ascribed to Deity. It would not be wrong to call our Saviour '*The* Angel of the LORD'. When asked to give his name by Manoah (Mal'akh YHWH-the Angel of the LORD) gave the name *Wonderful* (*pele*, the same title as is given in Isaiah 9:6, *Wonderful* counsellor).

In praying to the Holy Spirit we also have titles. Ezekiel prayed to the Holy Spirit using his literal name, 'Come Oh Wind!' (*Ruach* in the Hebrew means both breath or wind which is the same name as Spirit). Paul calls the Holy Spirit, 'the Spirit of wisdom and revelation'. Our Lord called him the Counsellor or Paraclete.

Whatever names we use for deity they are all reminders in one way or another of the sublime and glorious attributes of God. They are designed to provide for us means by which our thoughts of Deity are raised up and enhanced so that we might be able to conceive of, worship and pray in a worthy manner. □□□□

A Lively and Edifying Prayer Meeting

As the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Table do not function independently from the Word of God, so the Prayer Meeting should not operate as though it was divorced from Scripture. A lively, short and inspiring exposition should lay the foundation for the meeting, or alternatively a Bible-reading appropriate to the nature of the Prayer Meeting with just a few comments. A heart-warming brief exhortation from Scripture concerning the urgency and importance of prayer is always suitable, providing it is not a repeat from a previous time but freshly thought out. Unless our minds are governed and inspired by the truth we will not pray as we should.

Surely a foremost requirement for the weekly Prayer Meeting is leadership. After a hard days work many feel jaded or tired and might have arrived only just having overcome the temptation to stay at home and relax. Few have time to prepare themselves to come full of verve and zeal. A leader who is full of truth and enthusiasm is needed up-front providing he does not dominate everything. His role is to inspire and lead so that a sequence of prayers is encouraged. All illustrations are limited but we could think of a symphony orchestra. The conductor leads, but is not himself the whole, that is strings, trumpets and all. Neither does he bash and beat, but rather coaxes and inspires the best from his players.

Clearly, and briefly, urgent needs should be stated directly before prayers commence. If drowsiness prevails the leader should call on those willing to be called on to lead. Any special focus for prayer (a nation, a government, a people, a missionary family or group, an imprisoned leader in Russia), should be lucidly declared with just enough information to quicken the memory and imagination. Such information does not have to be given all at once. Some can be retained and given when there is a lull in the intercession. Flexibility is most important. Set predictable forms or routines can be a menace if they breed dullness. The leader, while encouraging maximum participation, should at the same time warn against careless prayers. In the O.T. blind, lame and scrawny animals were not acceptable as sacrifices.

The form of speech or grammar is not important. Those present should never be discouraged because English is their second or third language. Nor should there be any effort to employ high-sounding language or use purple passages. Think of a parent amazed to hear that kind of artificial talk from his child! Reverence is essential and that comes or stems from the heart. A skilful actor can use the most exalted language but if his heart is wicked his hypocrisy will soon be found out, as was the case with Simon Magus (Acts 8). Prayers which preach at others should be regarded as anathema. Any leader worth his salt will correct that. Also, giving the Lord information really means that it is intended for the others present, and does not constitute prayer at all. Information should be separate from prayer and any person who has this habit is encouraged to give his information first, and then to pray.

It is possible that someone goes on at inordinate length. That is bad manners if we are waiting to represent the Fellowship at the throne of grace. Imagine, if as a group we were granted a time with our sovereign, and then one took the whole time! If someone is

taking all night then action is called for, and the leader could announce a hymn to sing while the brother completes his prayer, or devise some other way to deal with the problem!

We would not subscribe to the idea of everyone praying audibly at the same time as that contradicts the principle of sense and corporate approval. The Bible clearly teaches that we are to say 'So let it be', that is, 'Amen', when we have listened to, and approve the prayer, exhortation or exposition.

In Acts 4:24 we are not to think that they all prayed at the same time (see Lenski's exposition). Rather the emphasis in that text is on the unity of mind of those present. That seems to govern the meaning of the verse. In some countries in order to get everyone into the way of audible prayer all believers in prayer meetings have been urged to pray simultaneously. It is a better idea to divide the prayer meeting up into smaller groups and then encourage praying in turn. It is unwise to compel prayer. Persuasion is one thing and coercion another. Whatever we do let us act according to the principles of Scripture.

Whether women should participate depends on the government or leadership of a local church. We should not seek to impose our views on other assemblies when we visit them, just as we do not appreciate visitors coming to tell us how we should run our assembly. In this matter it is for the elders to decide on the nature of the prayer meetings. Most prayer meetings are domestic and family affairs, as we soon learn when intercession is made for many persons by name, from sick babies, to children, to the youth, to the hard-pressed and overworked, the unemployed and the elderly, those in hospital, all by personal names. We encourage our ladies to pray in our weekly church (family) prayer meetings. We do have a problem with some whose voices are too soft to be heard properly. We do believe in our age of aggressive feminism that it is very important to have robust masculine leadership. This should include the reading of Scripture in public services by the best male voice we can find. Often it is thought that the reading of Scripture is the one thing that does not matter! But it is not a secondary item.

Perhaps the greatest weakness in our prayers, which reflects at our church prayer meetings, is our subjectivity, that is, we are almost wholly taken up with ourselves and our own needs. The Lord's Prayer is a guide to help us with this problem. In that guide we are shown that the first concern in prayer is worship. Allied to that surely is thanksgiving. First let us be taken up with the glorious character of our God and his attributes, then after that with ourselves. But even before we come to ourselves we should think of the worldwide extension of the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. The recent updated edition of *Operation World* published by S.T.L. is probably the finest help there is to assist the nurture of worldwide concern and prayer. Care must be taken to present overseas news in digestible slices and not huge chunks.

The importance of the Prayer Meeting can scarcely be exaggerated. We ought to do everything we can to insure its success. Let the altar and the sacrifices be well laid. Then let us look to the Holy Spirit for the fire!

Our needs are different from those in other countries. For instance, Ray Porter, who is pastor of a church in Salatiga, Central Java, leads a 1,000 member congregation which meets in five separate places. The method used was for topics of prayer to be announced and then for specified members to pray

about those topics. Burdened with this rather dead pattern of running prayer meetings the following decisions were made. We quote with permission of Ray Porter who is at present studying for a Ph.D. at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford.

1. There should be an effort to give each member an opportunity to pray audibly.

2. That there was no reason to have only one session of prayer or one method of praying in any one meeting.

3. That different prayer needs may be dealt with by different methods of praying.

4. That different methods of praying within one meeting will make possible longer sessions of prayer, and allow those less accustomed to public prayer to begin to take part.

And so we listed-out various methods of praying that might form part of a prayer meeting. This list is by no means exhaustive but might stimulate others to add to it.

1. A session of completely open prayer.

2. The reading of a Psalm or other passage of Scripture and then each member taking one thought from that Psalm to be made a prayer of praise or request. This could often be a chain-prayer with each member praying after the person sitting next to him.

3. Bidding prayers – the leader announces a topic of prayer and all pray silently for that topic. This can be useful for regular praying through lists of church members, Sunday School children etc. It also accustoms new members to lengthy periods of silence.

4. Arrow prayers – a specific need is announced and there is a succession of short audible prayers on that one topic. Each prayer may be ended with an 'Amen' or there is one collective 'Amen' at the end.

5. United audible prayer as practised in the S.I.B. (a group of churches in Borneo).

6. Dividing into groups of two or three where each person will pray for the personal needs of one other in the group. Such small groups may be used for other topics – especially if time is limited and there is much to be prayed about. Each group could, for instance, take one aspect of the church's life.

7. Conversational prayer – prayer without introductions of 'amens' until the end, as if we are talking together about the work of God in his presence.

8. The delegation of certain topics to specific individuals. This might be especially useful when there are neglected areas of prayer which are being avoided by members, or subjects on which we know that certain members have a special burden or knowledge.

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The Reformation and the Anabaptists

Part 2

In Part 1 which appeared in the last issue, (*R.T.94*), the historical background leading up to the Reformation was described. In particular the issues of the 'Church-State' and infant baptism were outlined. The spotlight was focused upon Zurich where two fundamental issues were asserted by the Anabaptist leaders, the magistrate being rejected as the arbiter in Church practice, and also the rejection of infant baptism. After some comment on the diversity of the Anabaptist movement as a whole, twelve features or characteristics of the movement were specified and the first six examined. The twelve features were as follows:

1 The nature of the Church
2 Restitution not Reformation
3 Regeneration
4 Believer's Baptism
5 Church Discipline
6 The Lord's Supper
7 Discipleship and Suffering for Christ
8 The Priesthood of All Believers and Sharing of Goods
9 Missionary Vision
10 Eschatology
11 Religious Freedom
12 The State and Pacifism

After reviewing features seven to twelve, conclusions will be made.

7. Discipleship and Suffering for Christ

Anabaptists responded violently against the 'dead lives' that seemed to result from Luther's stress on 'faith alone'. All too often, in practice, the Reformers' stress on salvation as an objective accomplishment in the past resulted in complacency. They stressed committed discipleship as *sequential* upon the new birth, not optional. The voluntary nature of their association with a gathered church involved deliberate adoption of a radical change of life-style. In contrast to a territorial church, where Christian practice had to be diluted so as to become a feasible 'majority ethic', the Anabaptist congregations were uncompromising in their efforts to follow wholeheartedly *all* the teachings of Christ. They were willing to accept that the Sermon on the Mount *was* to be followed by Christians – which would mean renouncing power, renouncing violence, renouncing wealth. Yes, only a minority would choose to take the way of suffering but the kingdom of God *should* be radically distinguishable from society around, not identified with it.

Great stress was laid on the ethical implications of the cross. Fortitude in the face of great hardship and suffering may perhaps be explained by the love the Anabaptists had for passages such as 1 Peter 2:20-23. 'But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called because Christ suffered for you, leaving an example that you should follow in his steps.' They were willing to suffer for Christ. Indeed, to them a

crossless discipleship was a contradiction in terms.[19] 'The cross' was only that suffering inflicted because of profession of Christ. (Too often it is diluted in such a way as to refer to the troubles suffered by all humanity, saved and unsaved.) One Anabaptist wrote from prison, 'If the Cross is not experienced then we have the proof that we are false Christians, not yet adopted into the sonship of God.' He was subsequently burned.[20]

A peasant woman on joining the Anabaptists said of the sacral system, 'We want to attend preaching services where Christ is preached; your Christ brings you no suffering.'[21] The Reformers actually vilified the Anabaptists for being willing to suffer, Luther hinting that they were demon possessed.[22]

Not only were they willing to suffer for Christ but they stressed the need for loving their persecutors. Many moving accounts remain which bear witness to their graciousness and charity towards their enemies. Two typical examples follow:

> In 1569 a Dutch Anabaptist, Dirk Williams, escaped from his home, closely followed by officials. Coming to a frozen dyke he crossed safely, but his leading pursuer fell through the thin ice. Williams turned back and saved him from certain drowning. Despite this he was burned slowly at the stake.
>
> Just before Christmas Day in 1553, a shipload of Reformed refugees from England were icebound in the harbour of Wismar after being rejected by Lutheran Denmark. The Wismar town council was also Lutheran and refused to have anything to do with these 'Sacramentarians'. . . . Near Wismar were Mennonites who, however, as heretics were forced to live in hiding. They heard of the plight of the travellers, raised money for them, sought out temporary jobs, and offered to give shelter to the children. . . . Later the Reformed revealed the names and hiding places of their benefactors to the Lutheran town council. These Mennonites were living up to the principle expressed by one of their Swiss martyrs, Hans Leopold, who said of them: 'If they know of anyone who is in need, whether or not he is a member of their church, they believe it is their duty out of love to God to render help and aid.'

8. The Priesthood of All Believers and Sharing of Goods

Within the church the Anabaptists emphasized the mutual responsibilities of church members. In practice the Reformed Churches soon developed a new clergy/laity distinction, despite their doctrinal stress on the priesthood of all believers by which they rejected the Roman Catholic view of Mary, the saints and priests as intermediaries between God and his people. The Reformers rightly stressed that *each* believer has freedom to approach God through Christ by prayer and in reading his Word. Anabaptists went beyond this rather individualistic application of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers and explored the rich New Testament connotations of the ministering of priests *to each other.* The doctrine became part of their overall practice of mutual service and encouragement: an area in which even their enemies had to admit they excelled.

One outworking of mutual aid and service was the sharing of goods with the needy of their congregations.[25] 'Community of goods' was one of the slanders most regularly imputed to them, their opponents wrongly accusing them of compulsory communism and intentions to enforce this practice throughout society. One group, the Hutterites, actually formed Christian community farms in Moravia. More often the 'sharing of goods' was a voluntary and spontaneous response to need, and a following of the Pauline injunction: 'At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. Then there will be equality.'[26]

As Menno Simons wrote:

> 'All those who are born of God, who are gifted with the Spirit of the Lord, who are, according to the Scriptures, called into one body and love in Jesus Christ, are prepared by such love to serve their neighbours, not only with money and goods, but also after the example of their Lord and Head, Jesus Christ, in an evangelical manner, with life and blood. Behold such a community we teach. And not that anyone should take and possess the land and property of the other as many falsely charge.'[27]

9. Missionary Vision

The Anabaptists were the first to make the Great Commission the responsibility of *every* church member. The mainstream Reformers advanced some incredibly ingenious arguments to prove that the missionary mandate no longer applied to them.[28] In contrast was the vision of the believers' churches who had an 'order' of evangelists whose task was to travel and evangelize.[29] The Hutterites of Moravia sent out many missionaries, an estimated 80% of whom were killed.[30] The Unity of Brethren sent missionaries to many different countries.[31] But *all* members were called on to witness and share in evangelism. One of the errors listed of the Anabaptists was that 'anyone who has a true faith may preach, even if no-one has commissioned him: for Christ has empowered any and every man to preach when he said, "Go, teach all nations".'[32] The Reformers believed that only a *commission by the magistrate* validated someone's 'call' to preach.[33] Luther, for example, said, 'Therefore let everyone ponder this, that if he wants to preach or teach let him exhibit the call or the commission that drives him to it or else let him keep his mouth shut. If he refuses this then let the magistrate consign the scamp into the hands of his proper master – whose name is "Meister Hans" (the hangman).'[34] We are indebted to the Anabaptists for their clear stand on the missionary mandate and the obligation of all Christians to evangelism.

10. Eschatology

'In common with other evangelicals, apparently all Anabaptists of the sixteenth century believed that the Lord's return was imminent.'[35] This expectation gave them the courage they needed in the face of unrelenting persecution. 'Even as Christ suffered, they too as his disciples, were not to consider themselves

immune from a similar fate. As Christ was vindicated in the resurrection, they believed that they too would eventually triumph with him.[36] Generally the expectation of Christ's imminent return had the healthy effect of promoting a real awareness of the division between the saved and the unsaved and zeal to make Christ's demands the norm for all church members so that they would be ready for his coming.

11. Religious Freedom

'God wants no compulsory service,' wrote Claus Felbinger in 1560. 'On the contrary he loves a free willing heart that serves him with a joyful heart and soul and does what is right joyfully.'[38] In contrast to proponents of a territorial Church (which inevitably involved religious coercion) the Anabaptists ceaselessly advocated the right of every person to believe or not to believe. Faith cannot be coerced. The clearest plea for religious toleration came from Hubmaier, who wrote, 'Concerning Heretics and Those who Burn Them', in 1524. He upheld the duty of the State to promote order in a sinful world but denied the State's duty to enforce religion. 'Now it is apparent to everyone, even the blind, that the law which demands the burning of heretics is an invention of the Devil.'[39] Hubmaier was ahead of his time. Today the descendants of the Reformers would agree with him wholeheartedly. In the sixteenth century the majority accepted the State's right to punish heresy with fire or sword.

12. The State and Pacifism

Anabaptists took the Sermon on the Mount literally. This meant that true believers should not kill at all. In practice they generally believed it was better not to be a magistrate if this would involve imposing capital punishment and religious coercion.[41] This is *not* to say that they rejected the authority or function of the State. The Reformers misunderstood their position, in that because Anabaptists denied the validity of the *State-Church* they were thought to deny the validity of the *State.* It was the illegitimate interference of the State *in religion* that was referred to in the much quoted article in the Schleitem Confession, calling the State an ordering of God 'outside the perfection of Christ'.[42]

Another much misunderstood aspect of the Anabaptists relation to the State was their refusal to take the 'oath'. The leading Church fathers had also rejected this on the basis of James 5:12. 'Above all, my brothers, do not swear – not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. Let your "yes" be "yes" and your "no" "no", or you will be condemned.'[43] By the 16th century the oath was not only an integral part of the legal system, it was used regularly to force all citizens to swear loyalty to the State and affirm their willingness to serve in time of war.[44] The Anabaptists believed they were forbidden to swear and also interpreted the oath of ultimate loyalty as an example of Caesar taking to himself that loyalty which can only be given to God.

The Reformers interpreted the Anabaptists refusal to swear as an appalling threat to the established order. They also regarded the Anabaptists pacifism as

a threat in that the Turks were gathering their forces during the 1520's and 1530's for an onslaught on Christian Europe. Even in the face of the Turkish threat, the 'Brethren' obdurately insisted, 'Christians are commanded to love their enemies, to do good unto those who abuse and persecute them; to give the mantle when the cloak is taken, the other cheek when one is struck.'[45] By 1540 virtually all Anabaptists were pacifist – an aspect of their 'non-conformity' which appeared particularly 'subversive'. To quote Kreider, 'They maintained that fidelity to the teaching and example of their Lord was a sounder ethical criterion than 'responsible' calculation about the effects on society if 'everyone did it'.[46]

Conclusions

Undoubtedly the Anabaptists displayed certain doctrinal weaknesses. In reacting against some of the practical outworkings of a stress on 'faith alone' they tended to *dilute* the Pauline explanations of salvation. They stressed the Christian's freedom of will to lead a new life after regeneration and so rather disliked Romans 7. In their eagerness to denounce infant baptism they denied the original sin of children – this being a common argument in favour of the obligation to baptize children. Sometimes they stressed the ethical example of Christ to such an extent that they ran the risk of minimizing his divinity and the redemptive accomplishment of the Cross. And so one could go on. Certainly in the realm of soteriology we can gain far more from the teaching of the Reformers. But in the realm of ecclesiology and ethics we may certainly derive positive lessons from the example of the Anabaptists. Surely the major 'achievement' of these people was that they were quite unshaken by an overwhelming weight of arguments based on 'commonsense' and 'expediency'. They were unafraid to look to Scripture and then challenge the very structure of their contemporary society. In asserting the gathered church principle they were more faithful to the 'sola scriptura' principle than the Reformers. It seemed to the Reformers that civilization itself would crumble if religious coercion were abandoned and toleration allowed. Even in that case, 'God's Word remains' said the Anabaptists. In other respects too the Anabaptists were unafraid of being thought absurd. Defying all contemporary assumptions they looked to Scripture and insisted that the Great Commission still applied. In contrast to the 'magisterial' Reformers they regarded the bulk of society as unregenerate and set out to evangelize them, even setting their sights further afield to foreign mission. Defying contemporary expectations they shared their possessions, refused to baptize their children, refused to swear oaths, refused to fight. In these and many other ways they offered a *radical* critique of 'Constantinian Christianity', always basing their stand on Scripture.

As regards ecclesiology, the Reformers chose to stay on the side of the safe, the known, and the expedient. To what extent do we regulate our Church life and evangelism and the ordering of our personal life on the grounds of what is traditional, rather than from strictly biblical grounds? The expected imminence of Christ's return prevented the Anabaptists from fossilizing their practices into

permanent institutions. If we cease to 'expect' his coming, our traditions and rituals become important in *themselves* and not as a means to an end. We cling on to them defensively allowing expediency to triumph over Scripture. Then again, to what extent do we expect to suffer for Christ? Are we willing to suffer for Christ? The Anabaptists were outstanding in this respect and exactly resembled the demands for discipleship as laid down by Christ. This aspect overshadows completely minor errors such as rejection of the oath before the magistrate. A magnanimous spirit should be shown by any State authority worthy of respect for *innocent* citizens whose consciences are subject to their religious convictions.

Then we should, in the light of the example of the Anabaptists, face the question: Do our churches merely pay lip service to the 'priesthood of all believers' – or are *all* believers, men and women, old and young, actively encouraged to serve each other? It is easier to pay someone to do the work. But pastoral needs of encouragement, exhortation and practical help are endless and to be met by *all* believers.

Furthermore the example of many Anabaptists, while not driving us to live in communes, should at least challenge our complacency to live in relative affluence while not doing enough to relieve the meagre situation of those less privileged.

Yet another aspect provokes the question: What resemblance does our 'Lord's Table' *really* bear to the New Testament 'Love Feast'? If in our churches we rarely if ever share a real meal together, if our 'fellowship' is a formality, then the Lord's Supper may become as much a 'ritual' as the mass. How can we encourage such 'fellowship' and 'caring'? It may well be that small fellowship groups will be the way forward. As George Whitefield exhorted: 'You do well to form yourselves into little companies of four or five each and meet once a week to tell each other what is in your hearts, that you may then also pray for and comfort each other as need shall require. None but those who have experienced it can tell you the unspeakable advantage of such a union and communion of souls.'[47]

In all other areas of church life, the Anabaptists, in circumstances of appalling insecurity and danger, lived out what they believed to be the New Testament pattern as faithfully as possible. Finally we can perhaps learn from the willingness the Anabaptists showed to separate from the world, remembering that this was never accompanied by hatred but by love for those still in the world. The Anabaptists insisted on following Christ and his commands, *whether or not* these fitted comfortably with the life-style demanded by society around. We, too, need to seriously consider whether our lives conform to the pattern demanded by Christ, or whether we adopt all the norms and values of the world. So often we justify our affluent life-style on grounds of expediency: 'The world won't respect us unless we're like them.' The Anabaptists took the ethical injunctions to *share* with the utmost seriousness, as they also took the ethical

injunctions to non-violence. 'Do not repay anyone evil for evil. . . . Do not take revenge. . . . Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good.'[48] What if evil authorities unjustly take our goods? The natural reaction is to strike back. Popular reaction applauds such counter-violence as heroism, as 'standing up for one's rights'. Yet those who are spiritually awakened can see Christ in the meek. The believers of Hebrews 10:34, 'joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property because you know that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions'. How far have we travelled from that frighteningly radical and simple outlook. Some 'fundamentalists' in America are even advocating firearms training in Christian schools so that youngsters will be 'willing and able to blow the belt buckles off any prospective marauder'![49] How seriously *do* we take the ethical teaching of Christ and how far *do* we demonstrate his love for our enemies? In these areas as much as in their clarity on believers' baptism and religious freedom, the Anabaptists have much to teach us. Looking back at the sixteenth century, from the perspective of our own day, we can learn from *both* the Reformers and the Anabaptists. As Reformed Christians we have a fervent appreciation for the doctrines of grace. With this *doctrinal foundation* (so clearly explained by the Reformers) we have a marvellous starting block for the kind of wholehearted *discipleship* displayed by the Anabaptists. Because we believe that we have been adopted as sons and daughters by the Father through Christ's atoning work – we have no option but to love each other! May our soteriology not be an end in itself but provide a firm basis for the establishment of disciplined, caring and evangelistically zealous Churches.

References

[19] Verduin. p. 260.
[20] ibid. p. 261.
[21] ibid. p. 262.
[22] ibid. p. 262.
[23] Account from 'Even unto Death'. J. C. Wenger. Quoted in *The Believers' Church* Donald Durnbaugh. p. 264.
[24] Account from 'Mutual Aid'. Mennonite Encyclopaedia, J. W. Freiz and H. S. Bender. Quoted in Durnbaugh. pp. 272-273.
[25] For discussion of this aspect of Anabaptist life see: Estep. Chapter 6. pp. 89-107, Verduin. Ch. 7. pp. 221-242.
[26] 2 Cor. 8:13-15.
[27] Simons. 'Writings.' p. 558. Quoted in Estep. p. 192.
[28] Durnbaugh. p. 228. Verduin. pp. 263-270.
[29] *The Anabaptists of the Sixteenth Century.* Ernest A. Payne. B.R.R. vol. 7. no. 3. p. 24.
[30] Estep. p. 95.
[31] Durnbaugh. p. 233.
[32] Verduin. p. 182.
[33] ibid. p. 181.
[34] ibid. p. 185.
[35] Estep. p. 200.
[36] ibid. p. 198.
[37] 'The Anabaptists' in 'The Christian and the State: Westminster Conference 1975'. Alan Kreider. pp. 29-30.
[38] Estep. p. 197.
[39] ibid. p. 197.
[40] For a thorough and yet concise survey of this issue see Kreider's article.
[41] 'The Stepchildren (Anabaptists) presently found themselves in a quandary as to whether a man can be both a Christian and a magistrate, seeing that a magistrate must be prepared to pick up the sword and, if need be, slay people with it. . . . The prevailing opinion was that it is better for a Christian to stay away from an assignment that may take him to the place of bloodshed . . . we may frown at this solution; but he who has been with the New Testament will have greater trouble with the person who has no problem here.' Verduin. pp. 274-5. (Quote taken from 1980 edition.)
[42] Kreider. p. 32.
[43] cf. Matthew 5:34-37.
[44] Kreider. p. 35.
[45] ibid. p. 36.
[46] ibid. p. 40.
[47] Quoted in *Studies in History and Ethics.* Mark McCulley. p. 36.
[48] Romans 12:17, 19, 21.
[49] Quoted in McCulley pp. 7-8.

Review

I Speak in Tongues More Than You All

G.-F. Rendal

Available from: Edition de Bérée, CH-1349 Juriens, Switzerland.

This is an unusual book; it is mysterious, fascinating, graphic and thought-provoking. It is mysterious because we are told so little about the author. He is French (or perhaps Swiss – the book is a translation from French), he was converted from Catholicism, belonged to, or at least had very close connections with, the Pentecostal churches, has a very searching mind, and has given us a record of his struggle to understand the Scriptural teaching on tongues. He writes throughout in the first person and his style and manner make the book attractive and easy to read – I don't think an Englishman could have written in the same way.

One of his great concerns was to discover what purposes speaking in tongues served. This he found answered in 1 Corinthians 14:22. Tongues were a sign to unbelieving Jews that the Gospel is now for every tribe and nation. This, of course, is not a new view, though he seems never to have met any Christian who explained it to him, but the way he expresses it is novel and more vivid than I have seen elsewhere. He insists, with 1 Corinthians 14:2, that speaking in tongues is always directed to God. Hence on the Day of Pentecost those in Jerusalem heard the disciples praising God in other languages, a sign that Aramaic was not the only language of piety, but that now God would be praised in all the languages of the world. He maintains that this sign was necessary because the Jews, including Jewish Christians, found it so hard to grasp the universality of the gospel.

He mentions two things that flow from this. First, the surprising title *I Speak in Tongues More Than You All* is given because these words were spoken by the 'apostle to the Gentiles'. What greater sign of the Gospel breaking out of the shell of Judaism and thrusting out into all the world than the erstwhile Pharisee praying and praising in many languages? Second, speaking in tongues is, in fact, the initial evidence of baptism with the Holy Spirit, 'For by one Spirit are we all baptised into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles . . .' (1 Cor 12:13). The emphasis must be on the word 'initial'. For how long were tongues intended? For as long as the sign was needed. Just as it is quite unnecessary for anyone today to have a vision such as Peter had of the animals let down in a sheet (but it was necessary for him), so tongues are quite unnecessary now because they cannot fulfil the purpose for which they were given. They fulfilled that purpose and then they ceased.

This is just a brief indication of the main thrust of the book. It doesn't, in my opinion, answer every question and some parts towards the end disquieten me. However it is refreshing and vital because it is written out of the real struggles of a sincere Christian wrestling with the Word of God – resolved never to rely on second-hand answers, determined to get his teaching from, and base his practice on, Scripture and Scripture alone.

Paul Brown

News items – Many will be encouraged to know that David Ellis, who has pastored churches in Montpellier and Colmar in France, has accepted the unanimous call to take the pastorate at Cuckfield, Sussex. He is due to begin in May 1987.

The Carey Conference for ministers, January 6th-8th, which was booked at the Carnatic Halls has now been moved to Rathbone Hall, Liverpool University, which is advantageous for several reasons.

OPERATION WORLD

A day to day guide to praying for the world

Patrick Johnstone

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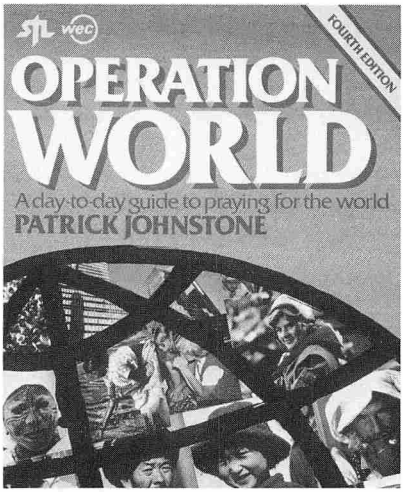

The 4th up-dated, edition of *Operation World* is now available. At 500 pages this unique source of information costs only £4.50. This book belongs to the bedside category to be used daily. It provides an ideal means of awakening zeal to pray for the conversion of all peoples of all nations under the sun. The compiler, Patrick Johnstone, inherited the mantle for this vision from the South African Hans van Staden who pioneered a great work of evangelism in South Africa's Black townships (Dorothea Mission).

The volume begins with descriptions of eight main regions of the world well illustrated with maps. After that the reader is provided with a complete outline of information for all the nations countries from the largest to the smallest, from China (5 pages) to Costa Rica (1.5 pages). These are in alphabetical order. Each one is described lovingly and personally as though they are individual personalities. There is a small map for each country and the salient information is set out with headings so that it can be gleaned quickly and easily. India is favoured with a much larger map (how many provinces of India can you name?) and 14 pages describing the different provinces. If you wish to acquaint yourself with and pray for the whole world in a year then you can follow the dates appended in the same style used in daily Bible notes. The size of the print is small and the paper used is cheap because the book is to be up-dated every four years. The information is all computerised which makes the task so much easier.

This book provides an ideal basis for preparing or sketches of spotlights on different countries to be presented during Lord's Day services or at prayer meetings, in order to encourage an intelligent understanding of world conditions, and the extent of present day gospel enterprise. An obvious danger is to confuse the congregation with too many statistics. Some churches are favoured with students from a wide variety of countries which means the countries they represent become so much more meaningful. In your church a modest start could be made with a series of reports or spotlights just on those nations where members have personal friends or relatives. It can be very encouraging when we observe corporate prayer for the land and people dear to us through personal experience.

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